

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

SENT TO D.C.

7-2-07

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM**

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name **Edison Park**

other names/site number

2. Location

street & number **6755 N. Northwest Hwy.** Not for publication

city or town **Chicago** vicinity

state **Illinois** code **IL** county **Cook** code **031** zip code **60631**

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this _____ nomination _____ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property _____ meets _____ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant _____ nationally _____ statewide _____ locally. (_____ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official Date

Illinois Historic Preservation Agency _____
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property _____ meets _____ does not meet the National Register criteria. (_____ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of commenting or other official Date

State or Federal agency and bureau American Indian Tribe

Edison Park
Name of Property

Cook County, Illinois
County and State

4. National Park Service Certification

I. hereby certify that this property is:	Signature of the Keeper	Date of Action
___ entered in the National Register ___ See continuation sheet.	_____	_____
___ determined eligible for the National Register ___ See continuation sheet.	_____	_____
___ determined not eligible for the National Register	_____	_____
___ removed from the National Register	_____	_____
___ other (explain):	_____	_____

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply)

- ___ private
- X public-local
- ___ public-State
- ___ public-Federal

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

- ___ building(s)
- X district
- ___ site
- ___ structure
- ___ object

Number of Resources within Property **FIX**
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing
<u>1</u>	___ buildings
<u>1</u>	___ sites
___	<u>1</u> structures
<u>1</u>	<u>1</u> objects
<u>3</u>	<u>2</u> Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register **N/A**

Name of related multiple property listing (Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

Historic Resources of the Chicago Park District

Edison Park
Name of Property

Cook County, Illinois
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6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

LANDSCAPE/ park
RECREATION AND CULTURE/ outdoor recreation
RECREATION AND CULTURE/ sports facility
OTHER/ field house

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

LANDSCAPE/ park
RECREATION AND CULTURE/ outdoor recreation
RECREATION AND CULTURE/ sports facility
OTHER/ field house

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

LATE 19th AND EARLY 20th Century AMERICAN MOVEMENTS

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

Foundation **Concrete**

Roof **Metal**

Walls **Brick**

other **Vegetation**

Narrative Description (Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

See continuation sheets

Edison Park
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8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria (Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing)

- A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations (Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.)

- A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** removed from its original location.
- C** a birthplace or a grave.
- D** a cemetery.
- E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F** a commemorative property.
- G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions)

Entertainment/ Recreation

Social History

Architecture

Period of Significance **1936 to 1957** Significant Dates

Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked above) **N/A**

Cultural Affiliation **N/A**

Architect/Builder **Solon S. Beman, architect**

Narrative Statement of Significance (Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

See continuation sheets

Edison Park
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9. Major Bibliographical References

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS)

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Primary Location of Additional Data

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository **Chicago Park District**

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property .71-acres

UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

	Zone Easting	Northing	Zone Easting	Northing
1	16	432303	4650330	3 _____
2	_____	_____	4	_____

____ See continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

See continuation sheets

Edison Park
Name of Property

Cook County, Illinois
County and State

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Julia S. Bachrach, Planning Supervisor and Elizabeth Frantz, Intern
organization Chicago Park District date April 5, 2007
street & number 541 N. Fairbanks Ave. telephone (312) 742-4698
city or town Chicago state IL zip code 60611

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:
Continuation Sheets

Maps

- A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- A sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

- Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional items (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name Timothy J. Mitchell, General Supt. and CEO, Chicago Park District
street & number 541 N. Fairbanks telephone
city or town Chicago state IL zip code 60611

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.). Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
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Section 7 Page 1

Edison Park, Cook County, IL

Narrative Description

Edison Park is a .71-acre site located at 6700 north and 7600 west in Chicago. Constructed as a public school by the Village of Edison Park in 1907, the site became part of the Chicago Park District in 1936. Throughout its history, it has provided a variety of programs and services to its Northwest side community. Edison Park consists of five resources: three contributing and two non-contributing. The contributing historic resources include a brick field house, which was once a school house, a flagpole, and the site's landscape. The non-contributing resources include a playground and a commemorative boulder honoring Thomas Edison.

Over the years, Edison Park has continuously adapted to the frequently changing needs of the surrounding community while retaining a high level of integrity with the field house as the locus of much activity throughout its history. Originally built as a school house 1907, the park evolved into a vibrant community center. The field house itself retains very strong integrity, and, although the building's purpose has changed, its structure and aesthetic character have remained intact over the past century. The landscape also conveys good integrity, retaining fine elements including hawthorn trees that were planted by the park district in the 1930s. In order to describe the park clearly and to show that it retains sufficient integrity to be listed on the National Register of Historic Places two corresponding plans are submitted as part of this nomination: a 1937 planting plan [A], and more recent plot plan dating from 1999 [B].

Designed by acclaimed architect Solon S. Beman and constructed in 1907, the field house [1] originally served as a school for the suburb of Edison Park. The building was rendered in a modest and pragmatic expression of the Arts and Crafts Style. It is a two-story structure, rectangular in plan, and composed of red brick. It has a standing seam metal hipped roof. While the metal roof was replaced in 2000, it is likely that it was originally clad in the same material. The earliest plans for the building that are on file at the Chicago Park District date to 1937 and show a similar standing seam metal roof.¹ The roof has overhanging eaves with exposed rafters. These rafters line up visually with vertical wood trim elements that are part of a decorative frieze extending along the upper part of each brick facades. Historically the wooden trim was a darker color than the background part of the frieze, providing an Arts & Crafts Style motif. Today the entire area, including the overhang and exposed rafters, is all painted the same shade of beige.

The building's primary façade faces N. Northwest Highway and represents the long part of the rectangular form. The front entryway is symmetrically located in the center of the façade. It has a double door on a low limestone stoop. Both wooden doors have a square window. There is a transom light above the double door. Extending above the doors and transom is a simple wooden gable. It is supported by wooden brackets that sit on simple limestone elements. Extending horizontally within the triangular pediment-area is a painted sign that says: "6755 Edison Park." Although this sign was re-painted over the years, there was a similar sign with the same information in this location since the 1930s.

¹ Chicago Park District, Edison Park Field House Elevations, August 19, 1937.

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Flanking the front entryway, there are two small four-over-one double-hung windows, resting on limestone sills. On the second story, placed directly above both of these small windows, are identical four-over-one double hung windows. Between these there is a larger second-story window that is placed above the entranceway. It includes a six-over-one double hung window in the center flanked by sidelights that have diamond shaped muntins. This window, with its unusual sidelights, is another one of the building's Arts & Crafts Style details. On both the first and second stories, flanking the small four-over-two windows, are three larger windows that also rest on limestone sills. These are handsome nine-over-nine double hung windows. The upper sashes of the second story windows are adjacent to the frieze. Beneath each of the first-story nine-over-nine windows there is a simple rectangular basement window composed of two square lights.

The building's secondary façades, on the shorter sides of its rectangular form, have identical fenestration. These facades repeat the nine-over-nine double hung windows— both facades have four windows on each of the first and second stories, with four basement windows that are identical to those of the primary façade. The rear façade is composed of brick, with a center wood frame portion with a flat roof that houses the stairway. This center wood frame part of the building has a double metal door on the first story and two nine-over-four double hung windows on the second story. Today this part of the building has vertical planked boards, while in 1937 it had horizontal clapboards. Although the 1937 plan [A] identifies this part of the building as a wood addition, the building likely included this extension early on, as the second story of the school was described in a newspaper article in 1910². The brick rear façade has two metal fire escape stairways leading up to single metal doors on the second story. Both fire escapes flank the wooden extension.

The building's interior retains excellent integrity and conveys its original purpose as a school. The interior floor plans have had only minor alterations, and throughout the building historic doors, trim, cabinets, and other details are intact. The basement retains its historic floor plan with men and women's bathrooms, two clubrooms (probably used previously as classrooms), and a room with a ceramics kiln, a function that began in the 1930s. On the first floor the two original classrooms are now activity and meeting rooms. Beginning in the 1930s, one of these rooms was used as a library, with a smaller stack room that now serves as the staff office. Framed prints dating to the 1930s and 1940s are still on the walls of the first story. The stairway leads from the center of the lobby area to the second story. This stairway retains its original vertical bead-board wainscoting, wooden handrails, and wooden post banisters.

There are three large rooms on the second floor as well, all of which have been used for various recreational purposes since the 1930s. One of these rooms houses an elaborate model railroad construction. It is open for public viewing, and is maintained by the Northwest Society of Model Railroaders. The middle room on the third floor is used as a tutoring center. Historically this room was made up of two long closets and an office. The partitions were removed to enlarge the room in 1967. The west room has housed

² "Question of Annexation Hinges on a New School— Edison Park Citizens Hint that the Village Might Come into Chicago if City Completes its Building." *Chicago Daily Tribune*, Feb. 2, 1910, p. 11.

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Edison Park, Cook County, IL

the park's arts program for decades. All these rooms are very sunny because of their large double hung windows.

Though the park is small, it has a lovely naturalistic landscape [2]. It has many large canopy trees and smaller understory trees planted in an irregular manner. The 1937 Planting Plan [A] shows that when the Chicago Park District took over, it planted many shrubs and hawthorn trees. Although most of the shrubbery was later removed, most of the historic hawthorns still thrive. The park has several irregularly shaped lawn areas. There are some shrubs in front of the building. There are also perennials edged by wooden borders flanking the front walkway. This walkway leading up to the building and walkways surrounding are all historic [A] and intact. Although there was a curved path that lead from the back of the building in the 1930s [A], it was removed by 1940 for it does not appear on any of the Chicago Park District plans after this date.

There is a flagpole [3] located to the right of the front entrance, which appears as early as 1937 on the park's plans [A], but was probably put into place much earlier. The flagpole is still located in this same place today [B].

To the east of the field house there is a non-contributing, medium-sized soft-surface playground [4] complete with slides and swings. This playground structure dates to the late 1980s; however, the park has had a playground in this general location since 1953.³ Constructed in 1988, the soft surface playground has a wooden knee-wall capped in plastic timbers. The structure is filled with wood chips. There is a fence along the east side of the playground that separates the playground from an adjacent parking lot. Although the original equipment has been replaced in recent years, the playground has remained in the same location since the 1950s.

In front of the field house [1] adjacent to the flagpole [3], there is a commemorative boulder [5] which is deemed as a non-contributing feature because it was installed in 1979. Inscribed in honor of Thomas A. Edison, the granite boulder was donated by the Edison Norwood O'Hare Kiwanis Club.

Over the years, Edison Park has remained a valuable community resource while adapting to changing public needs. Its century old Arts and Crafts style structure has had few alterations although it continues to provide many important educational and recreational functions. The Edison Park community area possesses only a small number of historic resources. The Chicago Historic Resources Survey, completed by the Chicago Commission on Landmarks in 1996, identified fewer than fifty significant historic resources in Edison Park (Community Area #9). Though modest in size and appearance, Edison Park possesses a fine building designed by a renowned Chicago architect. The field house and its site retain strong integrity and clearly conveys its history as a school, library, and park.

³ Edison Park, 1988 Playground Rehabilitation, Oct 1988

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Edison Park, Cook County, IL

Edison Park List of Historic Resources

Contributing Resources

Field House [1]

Landscape [2]

Flagpole [3]

Buildings

Sites

Structures

Objects

Non-contributing Resources

Playground [4]

Commemorative boulder [5]

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Edison Park, Cook County, IL

Statement of Significance

Edison Park meets Criterion A and Criterion C for listing on the National Register of Historic Places. The property is locally significant, representing the historical development of the Edison Park community on the far northwest side of Chicago. The park's attractive brick field house has had many important public functions in its one hundred year history. Designed by renowned architect Solon Spencer Beman, the building was constructed in 1907 as a public school for the suburban community of Edison Park. Over the years, the building has served as a sub branch of the Chicago Public Library and a Chicago Park District field house since 1936. The park district made significant improvements to the building and its landscape, and has provided recreational and cultural programming to the Edison Park community from this location for more than seventy years.

This property qualifies for listing on the National Register under the multiple documentation form, "The Historic Resources of the Chicago Park District." The property is significant during the period from 1936 when Chicago Park District began leasing the site, to 1957, the current fifty-year cut-off date for the National Register of Historic Places. The property has significance in the following areas: Entertainment/ Recreation, Social History, and Architecture.

Located thirteen miles northwest of the Loop, the Edison Park neighborhood shares its early history with the adjacent village of Niles. After serving as a summer camp for Native Americans for many years, the area was first settled by German farmers in the 1830s. Only minimal development occurred after the construction of railroads in the area in the 1850s. When six electric streetlights were installed at intersections north of the railroad station, the community was nicknamed "The Electric Suburb" and renamed for Thomas A. Edison.⁴ By the early 1890s, the Village of Edison Park was formally incorporated.

Streets were platted, developers began building homes, and a hotel located north of the railroad tracks. Speculators "extolled the advantages of our location— and very close proximity to the great city of Chicago. They showed the nicely laid out streets and a few of the homes as well. The lots were sold at a very good price."⁵ The villagers also touted the quality of the water that came from their artesian well.

Despite the fact that Edison Park was a community of only a few dozen families at the turn of the century, two of its early residents were nationally-acclaimed artists. "Painter Adam Emory Albright inherited two lots at Lunt and Overhill, swapped for some of his paintings, and built a log cabin studio."⁶ After planting "patches of wheat, oats, rye, barley, corn, clover, vegetables of several kinds and even flax," Albright used his own grounds as the background of his paintings which often featured children in farm scenes.⁷ (Emory's twin sons Ivan and Malvin also went onto to become renowned artists.) Sculptor Leonard Crunelle also lived in

⁴ Chicago Fact Book Consortium. Local Community Fact Book. Local Community Fact Book Chicago Metropolitan Area Based on the 1970 and 1980 Censuses. University of Illinois at Chicago, 1984, 24.

⁵ Edison Park Kiwanis Club, *Edison Park Chicago: A Delightful Place to Live*, n.d.

⁶ Edison Park Chamber of Commerce Web-site, <http://www.edisonpark.com/history.html>.

⁷ "Farming for Backgrounds." *Chicago Daily Tribune*, Dec. 2, 1902, p. D6.

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Edison Park, Cook County, IL

Edison Park. Discovered and mentored by Lorado Taft. Crunelle went on to become one of Chicago's most eminent sculptors. In Chicago, his sculptures include the *Victory* monument in the Bronzeville neighborhood, the fountain figures in Grant Park (originally in Humboldt Park), and the Oglesby monument in Lincoln Park. He also sculpted the monument to General John Logan, which stands in Vicksburg National Military Park, a memorial to Abraham Lincoln's service in the Black Hawk War in Dixon, Illinois, and a bronze portrait of Sakakawea and her baby son located on the grounds of the North Dakota State Capitol in Bismarck.

Around the turn of the century, residents of the Village of Edison Park began discussing the need to build an elementary school. For several years younger children attended school in a frame house near what is now Oshkosh Avenue, and Northwest Highway, known as "Arden School."⁸ Fifth through eighth grade students attended the Grant Place School in Park Ridge. On March 25, 1905, residents attended a meeting of the school board calling attention to "the uncomfortable, unsanitary, and altogether inadequate accommodations of the school building in that part of the district and urging the Board to take some immediate action for the relief of existing conditions."⁹ The board responded by holding a public meeting to discuss land acquisition for a potential school. The school board then issued bonds for \$8500 to secure the site and construct the school building. In December of 1905, the board authorized one of its members, Ralph Snoad, to meet with architect Solon S. Beman "in regard to the new school building at Edison Park and get his estimate for cost of the building."¹⁰

Solon Spencer Beman was one of Chicago's most accomplished nineteenth- and early twentieth-century architects. Born and raised in Brooklyn, New York, Beman (1853 – 1914) was trained in the office of architect Richard Upjohn. Through his friend, landscape designer Nathan F. Barrett, Beman met George M. Pullman, and soon designed an estate for the famous railroad magnate at Elburon, New Jersey. "Pullman was so impressed with these plans that he commissioned the 26-year old architect to design all the structures for him in the proposed industrial town of Pullman, near Chicago."¹¹ Beman moved to Chicago in 1879, and along with Nathan F. Barrett began designing one of the first planned communities in the United States. This "model town" included 1,300 residences for workers ranging from laborers to administrators, a large water tower, theatre, church, market and a school.

Widely acclaimed for the eclectic architecture of Pullman, Beman was made a Fellow of the American Institute of Architects in 1886. He served on the Board of Architects for the World's Columbian Exposition and produced designs for several fair structures, most notably the massive Mines and Mining Building. Beman designed several buildings for the Studebaker family, including a factory building in South Bend, Indiana, and a

⁸ Information provided by Anne Lunde, local historian whose grandfather Erling Lunde attended the "Arden School," written account dated December, 11, 2006.

⁹ Secretary's Record Book Board of Education District 2 | District 6-Park Ridge, March 25, 1905, p. 98 (research conducted by Anne Lunde, December, 2006 January 2007).

¹⁰ Ibid. December 21, 1905, p. 115.

¹¹ Charles W. Snell, Survey Historian, National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form, Pullman Historic District, February 24, 1970.

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showroom for carriages in Chicago, now known as the Fine Arts Building. He designed a broad range of buildings in various styles. His lavish estates include the Edith Rockefeller McCormick mansion (no longer extant), more than a dozen Christian Science Churches built throughout the Midwest, and the Blackstone Branch of the Chicago Public Library, which opened in 1904.

Beman prepared initial plans for the Edison Park School early in 1906. The board rejected his original cost estimate on February 1, 1906, and asked him to design a cheaper building.¹² *Construction News* reported that S.S. Beman was designing a school for the Village of Edison Park by the end of April, 1906.¹³ To keep the project on its budget of only \$8,500 the Board's Building and Grounds Committee decided to that the initial construction would include the completion of the rooms on the first floor, while the rooms on the second floor would initially remain unfinished.¹⁴

The Building and Grounds Committee rejected the first construction bids because they were too high. At a special meeting in July of 1906, the board reviewed and accepted a lower bid submitted by local contractor Oscar E. Brooks. Brooks' bid of \$9,035 for included all of the construction except for steam heating.¹⁵ In August the President of the Board was authorized to sign the contract for erecting the building.¹⁶

In the spring of 1907, while the building was under construction, Edison Park resident Theodore H. Lunde donated a "beautiful piano" for the new school.¹⁷ In subsequent years, he also paid to have the piano tuned. That summer, the contractors finished the new school. The board authorized filling the ground around the new school and leveling it, as well as installing a water meter.¹⁸ By the fall of 1907, the first floor was furnished and an extra teacher hired for a "third room."¹⁹ Edison Park School officially opened on September 3, 1907.

A few years after the new school opened, the board began efforts to issue bonds to build an addition to a nearby school and to cover the costs of finishing the two upstairs rooms at Edison Park School. In March of 1910, an election was held to issue bonds for the two projects, but the measure failed to win public support.²⁰ The board sought legal advice regarding how it could fund the necessary improvements to finish Edison Park School. In the meantime, villagers began discussing the possibility of annexing Edison Park to Chicago. Many nearby suburban areas such as Jefferson Park had been annexed earlier. A 1910 article that appeared in the *Chicago Daily Tribune* indicated that some citizens would favor annexation if it would mean that the "school system would immediately come under the control of the board of education," and that

¹² Minutes of what is now the School District 64, Park Ridge, research conducted by Anne Lunde, December, 2006.

¹³ Information provided by Charles Gregersen, historian, Jan. 17, 2007. *Construction News*, April 28 and May 12, 190. 6 Edison Park is erroneously listed as "Village of Addison Park."

¹⁴ Secretary's Record Book Board of Education District 2 District 64 Park Ridge, May 25, 1906, p. 98 (research conducted by Anne Lunde, December, 2006 January 2007).

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, July 31, 1906, p. 146.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, August 21, 1906.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, March 22, 1907, 161.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, August 22, 1907.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰ *Ibid.*, March 10, 1910.

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other grammar school grades would move into the Edison Park School "as soon as the upper story of the school building could be made tenatable."²¹

In the fall of 1910, Edison Park joined Chicago when a total of 103 residents voted in favor of annexation and only twenty-four voted against it. A newspaper article asserted that not since "Manhattan Island was annexed to Brooklyn has there been such polling booth unanimity."²² By the fall of 1911, the Chicago Board of Education had taken possession of the building, hired appraisers to determine its value, and began making repairs. From Board of Education reports, it appears that the school continued to operate without any period of closing.²³ By the fall of 1912, the Chicago Public School lists the property as a branch school with two rooms, and one portable classroom. At that time the Edison Park Branch School had a total of three teachers and 100 students.²⁴ It is likely that the upper story was finally finished in 1913, because by fall of that year, school directories described the branch school as a four room building with four teachers, 120 seats, and no portable classrooms.²⁵

The Edison Park Branch School continued to operate even after the construction of nearby Ebinger School in 1927. At that time, the school became the Ebinger Branch School. In the 1930s, a delegation of area residents presented a petition to the Chicago Park District requesting the construction of a field house at nearby Olympia Park. Robert J. Dunham, president of the Chicago Park District Board informed residents that while no funds were available to build a field house in the park that "an effort is being made to use the Ebinger school, 7350 Pratt Boulevard for a field house," for the Edison Park community.²⁶

The Board of Education was likely reluctant to close its new school, which had an enrollment totaling approximately 1000 students. Instead, it converted the branch school into a field house, entering into a lease agreement with the Chicago Park District in 1936. Using WPA funds, the park district made physical improvements to the landscape and building to convert the site to a park. These included reconditioning the landscape, planting twenty-nine trees and hundreds of shrubs, laying new sidewalks, re-glazing windows, and making general repairs to sashes, doors, floors, and wiring.²⁷

The new Edison Park began offering a variety of programs including physical fitness, archery, rug weaving, woodworking, and a nature lore club. Despite the park's small size, it provided many organized activities beginning in the late 1930s. Edison Park also had a music instructor who directed a large choral group and taught a weekly music appreciation class in the field house.

²¹ "Question of Annexation Hinges on a New School—Edison Park Citizens Hint That the Village Might Come into Chicago if City Completes its Building," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, Feb. 2, 1910, p.11.

²² "Edison Park Joins Chicago," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, December 4, 1910, p. 16.

²³ Chicago Board of Education Reports, 1911-12.

²⁴ Directory of Public Schools, Chicago Public Schools, 1912-13.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 1913-14.

²⁶ "Ebinger School May be Edison Park Field House," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, Dec. 20, 1936, p. NW3.

²⁷ Third Annual Report of the Chicago Park District for the Year Ending December 31, 1937, pp. 40-41.

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In addition to its regular classes, there were special holiday celebrations, such as Christmas parties and Halloween costume contests. In some years, when all of the 600 boys and girls who participated in field house activities were invited to attend the annual Christmas celebration, the party was so large it was held in a nearby school auditorium.

During the World War II era, the park offered Red Cross classes and other Civil Defense training for adults. At that time, children participated in an Americanization program. The American Legion, which had been meeting in the school building since 1925, also continued to hold monthly meetings in one of the first floor classrooms.

The other first floor classroom field house also had a deposit station of the Chicago Public Library which opened in 1937. Within a few years, this was expanded into a sub branch library. A 1944 newspaper article mentions the Edison Park sub branch library as one of the locations for its summer reading program.²⁸ The small library operated out of the field house for over twenty years. When it was removed in 1960, the Chicago Public Library replaced it with a traveling branch of the Children's Book Caravan in 1961.²⁹

Despite the closing of the library, the park continued to flourish as an active community center. In the 1950s, the Edison Park women's club held annual garden shows to display flowers, vegetables, container plantings grown or created by park patrons. Square dancing and other social events took place regularly in the field house. The park's small size did not reflect the number of activities offered there or the people who participated in them. Edison Park had organized teams for sports such as skating and midget baseball, although competitions took place in other parks.

In the mid-1960s, Alderman Edward Scholl complained that women in the Edison Park community weren't adequately served by the Chicago Park District. The administration agreed to assign a female physical instructor after the completion of a \$40,000 field house rehabilitation project.³⁰ The project, which included modernizing the bathrooms and repainting the interior, was completed in 1968. The Edison Park Community Council organized ceremonies to celebrate the completion of the project.

Over the last several decades, Edison Park has changed little in its vital role to the community or its appearance. Since the late 1970s or early 1980s the Northwest Society of Model Railroaders has maintained an elaborate train model set in one of the second floor club rooms. Like the American Legion, which still meets regularly in the park, the Northwest Society remains active in the park today.

Officially transferred to the Chicago Park District from the Board of Education in 1986, Edison Park continues to serve as an important community, recreational and cultural arts center. For pre-school age children, the park offers developmental programs like story time and crafts, and "Moms, Pops, and Tots," an interactive class for parents and children. During the summer, the park has an active day camp. The park has an extensive year-round arts program for children and adults, including classes in dance, drawing, painting, and

²⁸ "N. W. Libraries Set Up Youths' Reading Corps," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, June 25, 1944, pg. NW3.

²⁹ Information provided by Morag Walsh, Chicago Public Library Special Collections, July 25, 2006.

³⁰ "Plan Improvements in Northwest Parks," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, June 24, 1965, pg. N3.

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Edison Park, Cook County, IL

ceramics. It also serves as an A+ Education Center, and children from kindergarten through twelfth grade receive tutoring in reading, math, writing, study skills, and Prairie State/ACT preparation. Today, Edison Park remains a vital community center and valued historic resource to the surrounding community which shares its name.

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PLANS AND DRAWINGS

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- Chicago Park District. Edison Park. Field House Floor Plans. August 19, 1937.
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Edison Park, Cook County, IL

Geographical Data

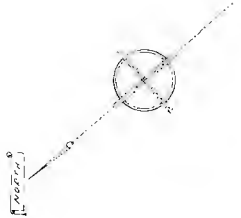
Verbal Boundary Description

The property is bounded on the north by the south curb-line of West Ottawa Ave., on the south by the fence-line an adjacent parking lot, on the east by the fence-line of the alley on the east side, and on the west by the east curb-line of North Northwest Highway.

Boundary Justification

This is the plot of land historically associated with the park during its period significance.

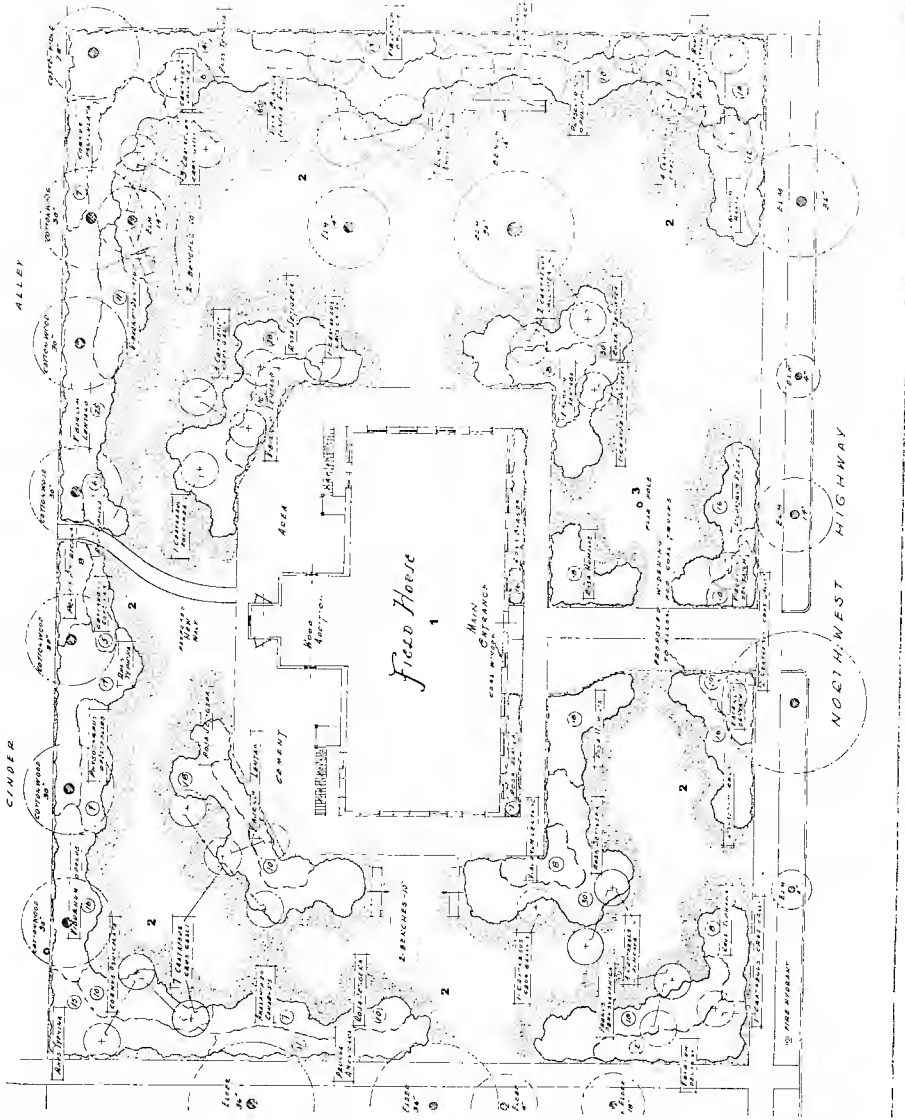
A



CHICAGO PARK LANDSCAPE DESIGN
 F. L. L. S. 17
 615 S. W. 17th St.
 Des Moines, Ia.

DRAWN BY: [Signature]
 CHECKED BY: [Signature]
 APPROVED BY: [Signature]
 APPROVED BY: [Signature]

DATE: 1/17/17
 DATE: 1/17/17
 DATE: 1/17/17
 DATE: 1/17/17



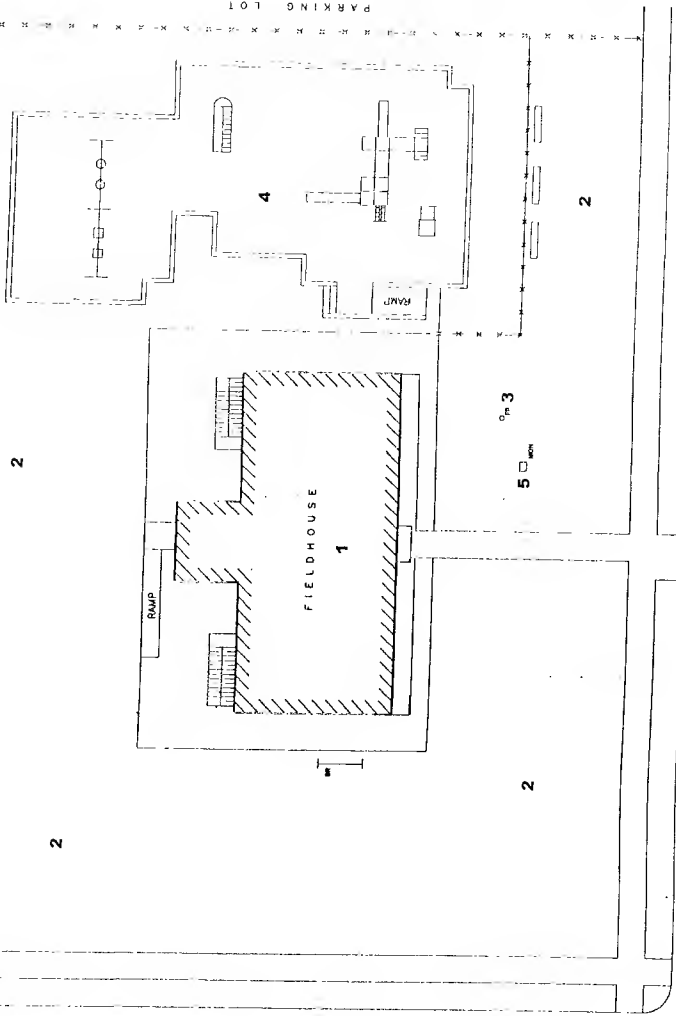
Section 2



ALLEY

OTTOWA AVE

NORTHWEST HWY



PARKING LOT

FIELDHOUSE

1

4

2

2

3

5

2

0 1 2 5 10 20



PARK NO. 62
COMM. NO. 17A

PLOT PLAN
EDISON PARK
SCALE 1" = 20'
CHICAGO PARK DISTRICT

6755 NORTH NORTHWEST HIGHWAY (7800N)

DRAWN BY E.S. 11/79 C:\PARK62.DWG

Lockesburg, 07000964,
LISTED, 9/20/07
{New Deal Recovery Efforts in Arkansas MPS}

ARKANSAS, UNION COUNTY,
Murphy-Hill Historic District,
Roughly bounded by E. 5th St., N. Jefferson St., E. Peach St., N. Madison St., and E. Faulkner St., El
Dorado, 07000974, LISTED, 9/20/07

ARKANSAS, WOODRUFF COUNTY,
McCrary Waterworks,
Jct. of N. Fakes and W. Third,
McCrary, 07000968,
LISTED, 9/20/07
{New Deal Recovery Efforts in Arkansas MPS}

ARKANSAS, YELL COUNTY,
Brearley Cemetery Historic Section,
AR 27 approx. 1, 2 mi. W of AR 22,
Dardanelle, 07000975,
LISTED, 9/20/07

CALIFORNIA, TUOLUMNE COUNTY,
Tuolumne County Courthouse (Boundary Increase), Bounded by N Washington St., W Yancy Av., N
Green St. & W Jackson St., Sonora, 07000695, LISTED, 9/19/07

ILLINOIS, COOK COUNTY,
Edison Park,
6755 N. Northwest Hwy.,
Chicago, 07000990,
LISTED, 9/21/07
{Chicago Park District MPS}

INDIANA, ELKHART COUNTY,
Violett-Martin House and Gardens,
2612 S. Main,
Goshen, 07000978,
LISTED, 9/20/07

INDIANA, HAMILTON COUNTY,
Sheridan Downtown Commercial Historic District, Roughly includes Main St. from E. 2nd to the Old
Monon Railroad right-of-way, Sheridan, 07000979, LISTED, 9/20/07

INDIANA, JACKSON COUNTY,
Medora Covered Bridge,
off IN 235, 1/2 mi. SE of Medora over the east fork of the White River, Medora, 07000977, LISTED,
9/19/07

INDIANA, OWEN COUNTY,
Spencer Public Library
110 E. Market St.,
Spencer, 07000980,
LISTED, 9/20/07

INDIANA, WASHINGTON COUNTY,